WILL. SUMMERS's ARMOUR

as preserved in the tower of London ...
Pub. as the act directs by I Herbert Pall Mall. 1 June 1794 ...

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A PLEASANT

HISTORY

Of the LIFE and DEATH of

WILL SUMMERS.

How he came first to be known at Court, and by what means he got to be King *Henry* the Eighth's Jester.

With the entertainment that his Couſen *Patch*, Cardinal *Woolſey's* Fool, gave him at his Lords houſe, and how the Hogſheads of Gold were known by this means.

LONDON, Printed for *T. Vere*, and *J. Wright*, 1676.

The Life of *Will Summers*.

THe Proverb tells us, *Stultorum plena ſunt omnia*; All places are full of fools. There is Solomons Fool, He that deſpiſeth wiſdom and knowledg: There is St. Gregories Fool, Who is buſie in other mens matters, and careleſs and negligent of his own: There is Democritus his Fool, Who onely doteth upon things abſent, and what is preſent deſpiſeth, though much more commodious and beneficial than things paſt. Socrates hath his rich Fool, whom he calleth A Golden ſlave: Cicero's Fool, who can neither endure things preſent, nor prevent what is to come: There is Dionyſius his Fool, who beareth himſelf arrogantly to the humble, and ſubmiſſively to the proud: There is Pachimerus his Fool, who in ſerious things ſports, and in trifles and toys is ſerious. Ariſtotles Fool, who hath not ſence to diſtinguiſh good from bad. There is Crates his Fool, who in proſperity is drunk, in adverſity mad. There is Seneca's Fool, who always is but beginning to live, and feeds his fancies with new hopes even in the extremity of his age. There is Procopius his Fool, that conſidereth not in the beginning what the end may be, but repenteth himſelf in the middeſt: And ſo of the reſt.

Folly is the poverty of the mind, and amongſt fools, he is held to be the greateſt fool that knoweth little, and would ſeem to underſtand much. A fair and a beautiful perſon, ſaith Diogenes, that is defective in his ſenſes, is like a gorgeous houſe inhabited with a bad Tenant. The fool wanteth much, and were he poſſeſt of all things, yet did he not know how to uſe any of them; for the more rich a fool is, the more foliſh he is. A ſimple or ignorant perſon may be known by three things: he cannot rule himſelf, becauſe he lacketh reaſon; he cannot reſiſt his paſſions, becauſe he wanteth wit, neither can he act that which he would do, becauſe he is in bondage to folly; for where there is no capacity or apprehenſion, all perſwaſion or inſtruction

ſtruction is in vain. It is better to be unborn, than unknowing, for want of underſtanding is the root of all misfortune; neither is ignorance ever truly known to be ignorance, till it be matched with knowledg. *Unicum eſt bonum ſcientia, & malum unicum eſt ignorantia:* that is, The only good is knowledg, and the onely evil is ignorance. In adverſity it is a bleſſing, in proſperity a ſcorn: it hath the boldeſt face, and cowerdlieſt expreſſion, and is no better than the meer fancy of the mind; but as veſſels are known by their ſound whether they be whole or broken, ſo men are found by their ſpeech and behaviour, whether they be wiſe or foliſh: and as the wiſdom of wiſe men continually augmenteth, ſo the ſtupidity of the foliſh evermore encreaſeth.

Some be fools by nature, ſuch as we call meer Naturals, or Ideots: Others be cunning and crafty fools, who when they cannot thrive by their wiſdom, ſeek to live by their folly; and ſuch an one, it may be imagined, was this Will Summers, of whom is our preſent Argument: for as ſome things proceeding from him ſavoured of a meer brainleſs ſtupidity; ſo other things again expreſſed in him, a wary acute and ingenious capacity; ſo that he might be imagined to be a mixture of two metals, or a compound of fool and knave, in which word I no way tax his honeſty, but rather intend in it his crafty ſimplicity.

I ſhall not need to ſtand long to diſcourſe upon his Birth, Breeding, and Parents; onely I will deliver to you ſome pleaſant paſſages of his in the Country before he came to be a Courtier: he was of a low ſtature, of a pleaſant countenance, and of a nimble body and geſture, and had a good mother-wit in him, as the Story hereafter will ſhew.

Will Summers paſſing by chance where he heard a poor Miller begging an Alms of a Baker, and deſired to give him ſomething for the alliance that was betwixt their two Trades: Summers asked the Miller, how many Farmers had been cuſtomers to his Mill: who anſwered him, ſeven or eight, and that he only ground all their Corn: to whom he replyed again: Baker it is pitty to give this fellow any thing, for I find by him he is more fool than knave: for if there had been any wit in him at all, he would have undone all theſe Farmers before himſelf would have been forc'd to go thus a begging.

When

When his Mother went to burial, he following the Hearse, ſtretcht out his voice, and ſung as loud as he was able, for which his Father reproving him, he made anſwer and ſaid, Father, you are the greateſt fool of the two, for the Prieſt and Clerk will not ſing for her unleſs you hire them with money, and you ſee I am content to do it of free-coſt.

Coming with a Friend or Companion of his into a Victualing-houſe, they call'd for Eggs, which when they had eaten, and ſatisfied the Hoſtels, Will Summers made haſte to be gone, and his partner could not make him ſtay any longer by any means: but being ſome diſtance from the houſe, his friend asked him what was the reaſon he made ſuch ſpeed thence; marry, ſaith he, becauſe my Hoſtels ſhould not call me to queſtion for an after reckoning, for in one of my Eggs there was a whole Chicken, and I ſupt it off at one mouthful, and never paid for it.

In the way home it happened Will Summers, having his bundle at his back, and ſtraining himſelf with taking too large a ſtride, let

aye

lie a great crack from behind, which the other hearing, said unto him, Now out upon thee for a beastly fool, what hast thou done? who answered him again, Thou must nèds excuse me; and further I can assure thee, if my tail could have borrowed thy tongue to have made use of, it would have bèen talking long agoe.

Upon a time being walking in the middle of Summer, and the Sun shining very hot upon him, insomuch that he sweat again, looking up to the Elements, he said, Now if thou beest a God, Sun, take in thy beams, and kèep them till next Winter, and if you will afford me them then, I shall be much beholding unto thee.

Another time Will Summers and his Horse having crost a River in a Ferry-boat, and being very fearful upon the water, he spake

never a word till he had got safe over, and sitting himself down upon the farther shore, and fetching a great sigh, he said, Now what a blockish and senselels fool am I, for if I had bèen drown'd in the River, how miserably would my father have beaten me?

Upon a time being in place where a deboist Gallant came in, whose

whose only talk was of his Gentility, and from what a noble house he was descended, Will Summers seeing him so brave in words, and poor in habit, said unto him, What a coil is here with talking of Gentry and Nobility? I do not think but if the truth were known, our Millers horse is the better Gentleman of the two; for you shall never see him go abroad without a man to wait upon him.

Another time a Miller having abused him, he told him, that he thought there was nothing that he could imagine was more valiant than the coller of a Millers shirt: who asking him what reason he had to think so? made present answer, Marry because every morning it hath a Thief by the neck.

Upon a time, being very sick and weak, by reason of a Fever that had long troubled him, a neighbour coming to give him some wholsome ghostly counsel, bad him be of good comfort, and told him, that if he were taken out of this vain transitory world, he should be immediately taken up, and carried into Paradise, who answered him that he was glad of that with all his heart: for if the way to Paradise were any part of it up hill, he was never able to travel thither on foot, his leggs were so weak and feeble.

On a time Will Summers wanting money, and having neither money nor credit, knew not what to do; at length bethinking with himself how to get some coin, it being Summer time, he goes into a hollow Tree, and there gets a great deal of the powder or dust of the Tree, and laps it up in little Papers like to Tobacco, and rides unto a Town where he was not known; and it being a Market-day, opened a Box which he had before him, wherein were all these papers full of this powder, and there with a loud voice cries out, buy a Tormentor for Fleas, buy a Tormentor of Fleas: the people at that season being much troubled with fleas, bought every one two penny worth, and asked him how they should use it: Thus said he; strew it on the sheets before you go to bed, and I will warrant you it will torment and kill them all. So in a short space Will Summers had sold all, and had store of money, and went away merrily to his Fathers house. So the next Market-day following, he wanting more money, went again with more of the same powder, and took money enough; and some of those which had formerly bought the powder of him, told him that it did no good, but rather disturbed

them.

them of their sleep, nor did it kill the Fleas: Then said Will Summers, you did not as I told you; yes indeed, we did strow it in the bed: Ey but, said Will Summers, you should have had a little stick in one hand, and with the other hand have caught them by the nap of the neck, and so have thrust it down their throats, and that will so torment them, that they will never trouble you again. So they bought more of the same powder, and went home, and thanked him heartily, without any suspicion of his knavery and deceit therein.

Above all things Will Summers could not endure the lye, and if any man told him that he ly'd, he would be sure to strike him with the next thing that came into his hand. It so happened, that he telling a Tale according to his fashion, one that stood by and heard him, said unto him. Nay that (William) I hold to be an errant lye, which he growing to a pelting chafe, snatcht up a good cudgel, and came towards him, holding it over his head, and asked him why he gave him the lye: the other knowing his suddenness, and that he was but a word and blow, denyed his words, and said, he said no such thing; Ey but said he, thou didst; but said the other, I did not: he still urg'd it, and the other denyed it so long, that at length he brake out and said, thou lyest in thy throat, and in thy guts, to say that I offered to give thee the lye; at which words he flung away his cudgel, and said, that word hath given me satisfaction: It was well that thou didst not say I ly'd, for if thou hadst, I would not have left beating thee whilst thou hadst had one whole bone in thy skin.

To one that had two children at one birth, Will Summers came and told him, that he had the most honest and faithfullest wife of any man that was in the whole Parish, he demanding wherein: wherein, saith he: why she hath brought thee two children at once, and hath given them both unto thee; when, if she had not been just and honest, she might have conceal'd the one of them, and kept it to her self.

His Father upon a time sent him unto the Horse-market with a Nag to sell, now when he came to the place where the Chapmen resorted, and every one rid his horse to and fro, to make them the more credible, he tyed his horse in a corner, and sat him down close by him: At length one spying the Nag, and seeing him to be a very likely beast, and thinking him to be the seller, because he sat so near

him,

him, he asked him what business he had there: who answered, I cannot tell; he asked him whose horse that was: he answered, his that would by him: said the other, thou canst not sell him by sitting here; then (answered he) I will keep him, and carry him away: he asked him if he were sound of wind and limb; sure if he were, replyed he again, I think my Father is not such a fool as to part with him. The Chapman perceiving his simplicity, imagined it to be free from all deceit and cunning, bargained for him, and bought him.

He being easing his body, and close at his business, one that knew him passing by, call'd to him, and said aloud; Well said Will, I see thou art doing that which no man can do for thee: who answered, I do not desire it, for I am old enough to do it for my self: The other replyed, Indeed it is that which no body can be without; to whom (having made an end of what he was doing, and rising withal) he said, Nay that is not so, for I can be without it now, and if you like it you may take it for your labour.

His Father sending him into the Country upon some business, being benighted by the way, he light upon a Cottage, where by much intreaty he got shelter; but the house affording no spare Bed, he was forced to make shift and lye in an out-house where was a Hay-loft: Now the man having a Cow that had newly calved, had laid it there for warmth sake, in which Will laid himself close by it, not perceiving that any such thing was there. In the night he had a terrible dream, for he thought he had a great swelling in his belly, which troubled him very sore, and that in the end he was delivered of a Calf: Now at the break of day waking, and finding the young Calf so near him, presently apprehended that his dream was true, and fearing lest it would come to light, he presently got up, and taking his supposed birth in his arms, cast it into a ditch, and drowned it, running away homeward as fast as his legs were able to carry him.

His Father not being well, sent him with his Urine to have some counsel from the Doctor, who knocking at his door, and the Physitian opening unto him, he presented him the Urinal, who, as he took it from his hand, asked him withal from whence he came: to whom he made answer, I hope your Worship is wise enough to find that in the water.

Being asked by one, why a dog, when he made water ever lifted up his leg? he answered, For manners sake, and lest he should bepiss his stockings.

Many and almost infinite were his Jests which past from him in the Country for stupid and simple, others witty and wise, insomuch it could not be easily ghest to which his constitution was most inclined: but alwayes he abhorred all nastiness, keeping himself very handsome and cleanly, insomuch that in the Country his fame spread as far as the Court, and came to the ear of the King, who sent for him to see and talk with him.

Divers are the demeanours and dispositions of those which we call Fools and Ideots; some are of a sullen and dogged nature, others of a merry and pleasant humour: one in rainy weather will be full of sport and laughter: if you ask him why? he will tell you then, when the rain is over there will come fair weather, and rejoyce to think upon it: and when the rain is over, and fair weather comes, he will be sad and drooping; demand the cause that when the fair weather is over, the foul will come again. I have known another of such a contradictory spirit, that whatsoever you intreated him to do, he would be dogged and deny it; but that you warn him to forbear, that he would do, though he were sure to be soundly disciplin'd for his pains; but this Will Summers was an of easie nature, and tractable disposition, who after he had found the fashions of the Court, and tried the humour of the King, complied so well with both, that he gained not onely great grace and favour from his Majesty, but a general love from the Nobility; for he was no carry-tale, nor whisperer, nor flattering insinuater, to breed discord and dissention, but an honest plain down-right, that would speak home without halting, and tell the truth of purpose to shame the Devil; so that his plainness mixt with a kind of facetiousness, and tartness with pleasantness, made him very acceptable into the companies of all men.

I told you he was sent for to the Court, and coming up to London with his Cloaths at his back, and passing through one of the Inns of Court in the height of the Term, he observed a great company of Gentlemen in their Gowns, and demanded of one that was with him, of what Calling or Profession they were, who told him they

they were Lawyers: Lawyers, saith he? indeed for their sakes I am sorry for the whole City: Why? replyed the other; marry, saith he, because we have but one Lawyer in the Shire where I live, and he hath undone the whole Country; now they having so many here, I am greatly afraid, that in short space they will undo the whole City.

Well, to the Court he was brought, and had admittance into the presence of the King, but what conference they had together, is beyond me, in regard that I was not then present: and to discern the King the better, he put on a pair of Spectacles; and being asked the

reason, said, He could see every common man with his eyes, but to see the King he would put them on. But some say, that he asked him how many legs a Mutton had? who answered him two: again he asked him, how he could make that good? he replyed, that he had heard in the Country, how a sheep had four leggs, but being kill'd, and then call'd a Mutton, it had only two leggs, and two shoulders. He next demanded of him, (he being a fool) whether he were capa-

ble to inherit any land? who answered him again, that he thought he might: The King demanded his reason? marry, saith he, my Father being a wise man begot me a fool; now why may not I (being a fool) beget a wise child to inherit my land, if I had any: with such and the like questions the King made tryal of him, and presently entertain'd him both into his grace and livery; and now who but Will Summers the Kings fool? who had got such an interest in him by reason of his quick and facetious Jests, that he could have admittance into his Majesties Chamber, and have his ear, when a great noble man, nay, a Privy Councellor could not be suffered to speak with him: and further, if the King were angry, or displeased with any thing, if no man else durst demand the cause of his discontent, then was Will Summers provided with one pleasant conceit or another, to take off the edge of his displeasure: but from the general, I come to some particulars of his Jests, or merry conceits.

The King upon a time riding upon his Progress with his Nobles, and the Cardinal Wolsey past by a place, where (it seemeth) he had a Mistress, which Will Summers well knew, the King being disposed to be merry, asked him if he could rhime? Rhime my Liege saith he? that I can, for I have in me much more Rhime than Reason: Then replyed he again, look up towards that Turret, and answer to me in rhime what I shall tell thee, and began thus:

Within yon Tower
There is a flower,
That hath my heart,
To whom Will Summers instantly reply'd,
Within this hour
She pist full sower,
And let a fart.

Which the King laughed at exceedingly: then the Cardinal must needs rhime with him, and thinking thereby to have daunted him for his bold answer to the King, began, Come William, what say you to this Rhime?

A Rod in the School
And a whip for a Fool,
Is always in season.
Then answered Will Summers.
A Halter and a Rope,
For him that would be Pope
Against all right & reason.

Which the Cardinal hearing, bit his lip; for at that time there was some speech that the Cardinal did aim at it. These homely Jests might pass in those days, though the refinedness of these our times

times will neither admit such courseness of language, nor such boldness with Princes.

Nay, in those times, as they were bold in their language, so oftimes they would not make it a thing squeamish, to be somewhat prophane: for the Proverb being then on foot, That there were three several Trades, that could never be free from Felony, namely, Weavers, Millers, and Taylors. The King asked his Fool what he thought of Millers: Of Millers saith he: I will tell your Majesty; I hold them to be a kin to the Blessed Virgin: Your reason saith the King: marry answered he, I shall tell you; she above all colours preferreth a white Vesture, as betokeneth purity, sincerity, and chastity; and in that they also strive to imitate her; for you shall never meet a Miller but in a white and mealy habit: next, as she was before the birth a Virgin, in the birth a Virgin, and after the birth a Virgin: so a Miller is before his Mill a Theef, and in his Mill a Thief, and behind his Mill a Theef: but these words, though they be privileged for fools, are not authentical for wise men.

It was a custom in those days that no man should be admitted into the Kings Guard, but such as were tall statur'd, well featur'd, strong men, and valiant. Now it happened, that some places being then empty, to fill up the number divers Noblemen had preferr'd some of their servants, and presented them unto the King; (Will Summers then standing by) saith one of them, See my Liege, this man is no Coward, for he hath received this hurt in his face: And saith another, and this my man hath had such and such cuts in the leg: said the third, and mine hath had so many dangerous wounds in the body, and withal caused them to shew their skars which were apparent; which the Prince observing, and as the Proverb goeth, King Henry lov'd a man, he was willing to receive him into the Band: but before he would entertain them, he asked Will Summers what he thought of these stout and tall fellows: who answered him again, that he thought them not fit for his service: the King demanding his reason, marry saith he, I see these men have indeed been hurt, and mangled, and have their wends in their own hands: but I would have thee to send out, and make inquiry for the men that gave them these wounds; for in my mind, they of the two (if thou shouldst stand in need of them) are the fittest for thy service.

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One asking Will Summers why the best and richest Benefices were for the most part confer'd on the most unworthy and unlearned men: he made answer, Do not you observe daily, that upon the most weak and poorest Jades are laid the greatest burdens, and upon the best and swiftest horses placed the youngest & lightest Gallants: |

Upon a time passing by a very hard-favour'd Wench, he said to one in his company. And is not that a very dainty fine creature: which the Lass over-hearing, and knowing she was flouted, made answer again. Thou maist walk far enough before thou shalt hear any one say so much by thee. Nay, reply'd he, that I need not, if any man be disposed to tell as lewd a lye of me, as I did of thee.

Will Summers coming into a Chappel of the Fryer Minors, he saw Saint Francis painted in a very fair Table, sitting in the midst of four grave and reverend Doctors; who presently call'd to a Fryer, and demanded of him what Saint Francis, being a lay man, and no Scholar at all, made in that place, disputing amongst the Doctors: the Fryer replyed unto him again, why I tell thee thou ignorant fellow, that this Saint Francis was the greatest Doctor amongst them all: who answered, My thinks that carrieth with it very small appearance of truth, that the Fryer Minors, (which is the least Fryer, or the Fryers of the less Order) should have the greatest Scholar, or Doctor to be their Founder or Patron.

His custom was (by the Kings command) to keep a Catalogue or a Register of all their names in or about the Court, who had committed any notorious folly, or ridiculous act worthy just taration or laughter, and once in a quarter of a year to bring unto the King a particular, or list of their names: It so happened, that a Traveller and Stranger coming from beyond the Seas, tickled the King in the head with divers Spanish Jennets, of which, if his Majesty would furnish him with a certain sum of money, he would not only furnish his Stables, but his whole Country (in short time) with their breed; and prevailed so far, that he had a thousand pound paid him out of the Exchequer to that purpose, and so took his leave of the King: Some two moneths after, being to deliver up his Register, his Majesty found his own name listed amongst the rest of the fools: at which being on the sudden very angry, and asked him why he durst be so sawcy, to rank him in the number of the others ridi-

culous

culous for their folly: who answered him again: Marry Harry I do it not without good cause; for here came a stranger (no man knows from whence) into thy Court, and hath made thée believe he will bring thée horses over; but when canst thou tell? Now, wast not thou a very fool to trust a Traveller, who was neither known unto thée, nor unto any of thy Subjects, with so much money: to whom the King replyed; Ey, but what wilt thou say, if he come over just at the day appointed, and bring me over so many Jennets as he promised? What will I say? (saith Will) marry Ile tell thée Harry, when I see this done, I will make no more ado, but fair and flatly quite race out thy name, and put in his; and then he, and not thée, shall stand a fool upon record.

In King Henry the Eighths days, there was great posting to and fro from Rome; for the Cardinal Wolsey had much business with the Pope: Now the Cardinal had a natural fool to make him merry, which was called Patch; which Fool loved Will Summers exceedingly, as you may behold him saying, welcome Couz, welcome Couz:

but

but Will Summers loved him onely for his own ends; and being come to the Cardinals houle, Patch the Cardinals Fool, willing to give his Couzen Will entertainment at his Lords houle prevailed so far with him, as to have him to the Seller, which was the innermoſt, or private Seller, intending to drink ſome wine, and for further love and courteſie would breach a freſh Hogſhead of wine for his Couzen, and having pierced one or two Hogſheads, nothing came out, and yet was very heavy, went to another, and ſo try'd half a ſcore; at length Will Summers with a Hammer that lay by, ſtrikes the head of one of the Hogſheads out, and there appeared nothing but Gold: Now Will Summers he ſaith nothing, but when he came to to the Court, tells the King what a Seller of wine he had been in at the Cardinals; and that his Seller yielded no ſuch wines, nor ere would: How, ſays the King, have not I no ſuch wines in my Seller? no indeed, ſaid Will, for there is never a Hogſhead in the Cardinals Seller but is worth ten thouſand pounds, and better: Mother of God, ſays the King, that is ſuch wine that I never heard of; ten

thouſand

thousand pounds a Hogshead: nay, rather more than less: Come Sirrah, says the King, tell me your meaning, for I know there is something else in it; tell me, or I will hang thee: then Will told the King how his Cousen Patch, the Cardinals Fool, brought him into his Seller to drink Wine, and broached two or three Hogsheads, and no wine came forth; so at length he burst open the head of one of the Hogsheads, and that was full of Gold, and so was the next to that, and forty more which he saw; whereupon the King having formerly taken a distaste at the Cardinal, presently sends Messengers and other Officers to the Cardinals Seller, and there finds 150 Hogsheads of good Gold, which was conveyed to the Exchequer; which money was welcome to the King, for at that time the King had great need of it: Now the Cardinal hearing of this sad fortune, fell sick at Asher in Surrey, and makes friends to the King to pacifie him, and withal he sent Patch his Fool to be his Servant; which Patch hearing, fell a crying, and would by no means have gone from him, till the Cardinal was forced to command six of his tallest Yeoman to conduct him to the King, where they received him gladly: Then Will Summers shewed his new Cousen the Court, and divers other offices, which pleased Patch very well; and they both giving attendance.

The King at that time having an Embassie to send to Rome, asked Will whether he had a mind to go on pilgrimage to Rome, as many of his Subjects frequently did? To whom he answered, that of all the places in the world he had no mind to travel thither: the King demanded his reason why? He made answer; marry Harry because the old Proverb is newly come into mind, and that is this: The first time after that a man hath been at Rome, and returned from thence, he is thought to be a Knave; the second time he is proved to be a Knave; but the third time he is known to be both a Knave and an Impostor.

Going over with the King to Bullein, he had complete armour made for him, from head to foot; which is to be seen within the Tower of London: And the weather being rough and tempestuous, he never having been on shipboard before, began to be very fearful of the Sea, and calling for a piece of the saltest Beef they had, began to eat it before the King very greedily; who asking him, why he

eat such grols powdred meat with such an appetite, when there was such store of fresh victuals aboard: he made answer, O blame me not Harry to fill my stomack with so much salt meat before hand, knowing, if we be cast away, what a deal of water I have to drink after it.

One thing I had forgot which he spake to the King at his first entertainment, but better inserted out of course, than altogether intermitted. His Majesty after some discourse growing into some good liking of him, said; Fellow, wilt thou be my Fool? who answered him again, that he had rather be his own Fathers still, then the King asking him why? he told him again, that his Father had got him a fool for himself, (having but one wife) and no body could justly claim him from him: now you have had so many wives, and still living in hope to have more, why, of some one of them, cannot you get a fool as he did? and so you shall be sure to have a fool of your own.

The King being in discourse at Table with some of his Lords, held an argument, that of all his people in the Kingdom: whether of the Nobility, Gentry, or City-Merchants, or Tradesmen, of what faculty or condition soever, he thought the Rustick or Countrey-man to be the most even and plain dealing, as doing justly and alike to all: To whom Will Summers (then standing by) said, that he was not of his mind: Thy reason Will (said the King) what be they that deal more farely and proportionably? marry saith he your Fath or Hot-house keepers; for they to young and old, poor and rich, that come within their charge, give equal heat and warmth to all alike, without any difference or the least partiality.

Upon a time Thieves breaking into his Chamber, and he perceiving them, call'd out unto them, and said, I wonder my Masters, what you hope to find here in the dark night worth your seeking, when I can see nothing in the clear morning that is worth my keeping.

Another time lying in a Garden, he might perceive a fellow that had raised a long ladder as high as his window, and was ready to open the casement, and come in; when he suddenly rising, came to the window, and said, my friend, thou comest too early, thy best way is to stay a little while, for I am not asleep yet; which the Thief hearing, through fear let go his hold, and almost broke his neck down the Ladder.

Now

Now Patch being at Court, every one had a great deſire to talk with him, and would oftentimes give him wine; and he loved ſweet wine exceedingly, and it was as natural to him as milk for a Calf; and having drank ſomewhat too much, that his ſtomack would not bear it, and fearing to be ſeen, leſt he ſhould have been whipt at the Porters Lodg, the better to conceal this overſight, runs to a Cloſe-ſtool, and opening the top, puts in his head, becauſe he would not be heard to vomit; and when he had eaſed his ſtomack, he could not get his head out of the ſeat: ſo at length he cryed out, and no body heard him for the preſent, and he not able to endure the ſmell, ſtrived to pull his head out, which he could not do; but often forcing himſelf, at length pulled the ſtool out, which hung about his neck like a Band; which ſome eſpying brought him before the King, and told the ſtory, which made the King laugh heartily at his folly.

In the time of the Progreſs Will Summers being billeted in an Inne, the Hoſt of the Houſe took it as a great grace, that the Kings Fool, or Jeſter (whether you pleaſe to call him) would vouchſafe to

take

take up his lodging in his house, and when Supper was brought up into the Chamber, the Host thinking to cologue with him, (because he had that time a suit at the Court, in which he thought he might do him some pleasure) began to find fault with one thing first, and then with another, saying, the Trenchers were not well scrap'd, neither were the Napkins and Linnen white and clean enough for his Worship, and flung them down the stairs, and said he would fetch better: whose back was no sooner turned, but Will Summers took the meat that was in the Platters, Dishes, Pots, Glasses, Stools and all, and flung them down the stairs after him; at which the Host coming up in a great rage, asked him what in the Devils name he meant by that? no hurt I assure you mine Host, replyed he: but I seeing you cast down the Napkins and the Trenchers before, I sent the Meat and the Dishes after, thinking your purpose was, we should have supt below.

Will Summers at one time being angry with his Wife, and being come from Court somewhat early, and it being Summer-time, had in his house a very fine Cat, it being a Sun-shine day, the Cat plaid with her shadow, and then with her tail, running round about with her tail in her mouth, which Will Summers his Wife seeing, fell a laughing, he presently takes the Cat and knocks out her brains; and being asked the reason why he did so, made this answer, Because his wife should not learn of her.

Will Summers, before he came to London, having gained a good report, and being well beloved amongst Gentlemen for his merry conceits, used to come to the Town every Tuesday, it being a Market-day, and divers Gentlemen meeting together that day at an Ordinary, which was constantly kept there; Will Summers coming in, and hearing that the Hostess of the house had a kinswoman, which was held for a very witty lass, and she likewise having a good opinion of her own Mother wit; for her tongue was like a Clock, always wagging, any she hearing that Will Summers was such a notable witty conceited fellow, took time and opportunity to let him understand, that she had as much in her head as ever was in her Grandfathers; yet in some things she differed from the women in those days, for their natural complexion was their beauty: now this Butterfly, what she wanted by nature, she doth replenish by art,

as

as her boxes of her white and red daily can testifie. But to come to the purpose, Will Summers being come into the Ordinary amongst the Gentlemen, throws by his Coat, salutes the Gentlemen, and desires the Drawer to bring up a pint of the blew Charniko. Now Will Summers had a pair of hose on, that for some offence durst not be seen in that hue that they were first dy'd in, for they had changed their colour very much, and in that manner, that the one part seemed blew, the other green: The Wench told him, that his breeches being of so many colours, well suited with his condition: and for the antiquity of them, that they might not be forgotten, wished him to let them be put in print, and she would bear the charges: At which words the company laughed and jeered at Will Summers: and he being much moved in his mind, that his hose were now called in question, and before his friends, and by a Maid too, answered, By my faith Mistress, said Will Summers, thy face is most damnable ill painted. How mean you good Will Winter, said she? Marry thus, my Bartholmew fair Baby, that it were not for painting and painting, my Arse would be forgotten, and thy face would want reparations. At which words, she knowing her self guilty bit her lip, and in a parret fury went down the stairs very hastily. The Gentlemen laughed at the sudden answer of Will Summers: and now being dinner-time, and the Meat upon the Table, the Gentlemen would needs have the company of this witty Gentlewoman to dine with them; who being earnestly entreated came up, hoping ere dinner was done, to cry quittance with her friend William: and when they had placed her, they would needs have Will Summers sit next to her, because they did imagine they would have a fling one at another. Will Summers kindly entertains her; and being sat together, and sometime spent in eating and drinking, Will Summers having a mind to put a trick upon her, desired her to reach him the Capon that stood a little off her, and as she rose up, and putting out her arm and body to reach the dish, Will Summers sitting next to her, yerks out a huge fart, which made all the company in a maze, one loking upon the other, yet they knew it came that way. Peace Gentlemen, said Will Summers, and whispered her in the ear, I will say it was I. All the company fell into a huge laughter, she into a fretting fury, vowing she should never sleep quietly till she was revenged of her

Country-

Country-man Will, and so in a great chafe she left their company.

Will Summers keeping his Fathers Sheep in the Country, did use to carry a pair of Cards in his pocket, and meeting with boyes as good as himself, would fall to Cards at the Cambrian Game of Whip-her-ginny, or English one and thirty; at which sport he would some dayes lose a sheep or two: for which, if his Father corrected him, he (in revenge) would drive the sheep home at night over a narrow bridge, where some of them falling beside the bridg, were drowned in the swift brook. The old man, his Father, being wearied with his ungracious dealing, complained to a Justice, thinking to affright him from doing any more the like. In brief, before the Justice Will Summers was brought, where (using small reverence, and less manners) the Justice said to him, Sirrah, you are a notable villain, you play at Cards, and lose your Fathers sheep at one and thirty. Will Summers replyed, that it was a lye: A lye quoth the Justice, you saucy knave, dost thou give me the lye? No, quoth Will Summers, I gave not you the lye, but you told me the lye, for I never lost sheep at one and thirty; for when my game was one and thirty I always won. Indeed said the Justice, thou sayst true: but I have another accusation against thee, which is, that you drive your Fathers sheep over a narrow Bridg, where some of them are oftentimes drowned: That's a lye too, quoth Will Summers, for those that go over the Bridg are well enough, it's onely those that fall beside, which are drowned: whereto the Justice said to Will Summers Father, Old man, thou hast brought in two false accusations against thy Son, for he never lost sheep at one and thirty, nor were there ever any drowned that went over the Bridg.

Upon a time Will Summers seeing a decayed Gentleman in a very thred-bare Cloak, said to him, Sir, you have a very watchful Cloak on? Why, said the poor Gentleman? the other answered, I do not think it had a good nap these seven years: the Gentleman replyed, and truly Sir me thinks you want a nap as well as my Cloak, for you talk idly for want of sleep.

Upon a festival day Will Summers began to have a vein of mirth, and being in the Court-yard walking with divers Gentlemen, he espyed a little Gentleman, being of a very low stature, and wore a broad-

broad-brim'd Hat, which he presently tells to one of his friends, saying, if that Gentleman had but such another Hat at his feet, he might be served up to the Kings Table as between two dishes.

The King took great delight in Will Summers, for he could make such antick faces, and so change his countenance as he listed; for when at any time the King was set at dinner, Will Summers would but put in his head and face between the hangings in such a manner, that it would make the King laugh heartily, and then he would come up to the Kings Table in such a rolling and innocent posture, in holding his hands, and letting his eyes, that it is past describing, unless one saw them.

Infinite were the Jests and witty answers of this Will Summers, which would ask a longer Relation than this Tractate well affords, sparing the rest for a second part, if this former be by the courteous Reader well accepted, concluding with that which he spake upon his death-bed.

When he lay drawing near unto his end, a Fryer, who was his Ghostly Father, coming to confess him of his sins, he began to examine what estate he had in possession, and to whom his purpose was to leave it: To whom he made answer, that he had a matter of some five hundred pound, which he had gotten by the favour of the King, and that he meant to leave unto the Prince of the world. The covetous Fryer thinking to have perswaded him to have left it unto their Covert, began to grow very angry, and said, and why doest thou not rather conferre it upon us who are Mendicants, and needy? To whom he again replyed, because I mean to die in your Doctrine: for you teach us, that all the goods and wealth of this earth belong to the Prince and Princes of this world, and therefore this my Action shall be according unto your instruction.

An

An Epitaph upon the death of Will Summers, *Fool or Jester to King* Henry *the Eighth.*

STay, Traveller, gueſs who lies here;
I tell thee, neither Lord nor Peer:
No Knight, no Gentleman of note,
That boaſts him of his ancient Coat,
Which Heralds curiouſly emblazon,
For men (well skill'd therein) to gaze on:
Know then, that this was no ſuch man,
And I'le expreſs him as I can.

He that beneath this Tomb-ſtone lies,
Some call'd a fool, ſome held him wiſe:
For which, who better proof can bring;
Than to be favour'd by a King?
And yet again we may miſ-doubt him,
"A King hath always fools about him.
Is he more Ideot than the reſt,
Who in a guarded Coat can jeaſt?
Or can he wiſdoms honour gain,
That is all bravery, and no brain?
Sure no ſuch things, wit truly bred,
I'th habit lies not, but the head.
But whether he was fool or knave,
He now lies ſleeping in his grave;
Who never in his life found match,
Unleſs the Card'nals fool call'd *Patch*:
Of whom, ſome Courtiers, who did ſee
Them two alone, might ſay, We three:
And 't may be fear'd, it is a phraſe
That may be us'd ſtill in theſe days.
Well more of him vvhat ſhould I ſay?
Both fools and vviſe men turn to clay:
And this is all vve have to truſt,
That there's no difference in their duſt.
Reſt quiet then beneath this ſtone,
To vvhom late *Archer* vvas a drone.

Stultorum plena ſunt omnia.

FINIS.